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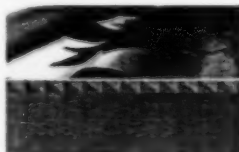
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CANADA'S NEW GOVERNMENT INVESTS \$15 MILLION IN PRIMROSE LAKE COMMUNITIES

BEAUVAL, SASKATCHEWAN (January 22, 2007) - Canada's New Government today announced \$15 million to improve the long-term economic viability of the Primrose Lake communities. The announcement was made by the Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. The department is sharing responsibility for this initiative with Western Economic Diversification Canada.

The funding will be used by the four Primrose Lake communities of Cole Bay, Jans Bay, Beauval and Ile-à-la-Crosse and surrounding areas to promote regional economic development and economic infrastructure. The funding is intended to promote development in communities located near the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range.

"This investment in regional economic development and infrastructure will help to build stronger communities in Northern Saskatchewan," said Minister Prentice. "For example, future projects could include the construction of resource access roads or the installation of business-related high-speed internet which will help to create job opportunities and increase economic prosperity. Through this funding, we will help to improve the lives of residents in the Primrose Lake region."

Following discussions with the communities, Canada's New Government has agreed to provide the funding over the course of one year instead of five years. This change occurred to better sustain the economic needs of the communities over a longer-term. As a result, the communities will benefit from the interest accrued on the total funding and will be able to provide capital more readily for projects. The funds will be transferred to the community-based, non-profit Primrose Lake Economic Development Corporation which, in turn, will place the funds into a professionally managed trust fund account. The Corporation will use revenues generated by the trust fund to support selected projects based on established eligibility criteria. Community representatives strongly favoured such a fund to allow more direct community involvement in selecting future projects.

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2008-01773/

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Created: 2007-01-22



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PRIMROSE LAKE AIR WEAPONS RANGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND ANNOUNCEMENT

- In 1953, the Government of Canada established a large bombing and gunnery range - the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range (PLAWR) on Crown land in an area that straddles the Saskatchewan-Alberta border northeast of Edmonton.
- The federal government has provided funding to the Provinces and First Nations to promote economic development in communities located near the Range. Saskatchewan still owns the land and retains the rights to the resources on the PLAWR as well as responsibility for forest fire protection.
- In 1995, the PLAWR Negotiating Committee was created to negotiate an agreement with the federal government. The group represents Métis individuals in four communities near the range: Cole Bay, Jans Bay, Beauval and Ile-à-la-Crosse.
- In 2004, the Government of Canada and the Province of Saskatchewan reached an agreement with the Primrose Lake communities whereby the two levels of government would invest \$19.5 million, over five years, towards regional economic development initiatives. The federal share was \$15 million with the Province of Saskatchewan contributing the remaining \$4.5 million.
- This 2004 agreement emphasized funds would be directed to both economic infrastructure and economic development initiatives. A mechanism to transfer the federal and provincial investments to the communities was not defined in the agreement.
- Ongoing consultations with the affected communities indicated their strong preference for a single-year transfer to Primrose Lake Economic Development Corporation (PLEDC) and placement into a professionally managed Trust Fund. The new agreement ensures both the interests of the communities were considered and the effective governance of the federal investment in a transparent and accountable manner.
- Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), with its mandate to develop and diversify the western Canadian economy, will deliver the federal funding on behalf of the Government of Canada.
- The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is also Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians and therefore responsible to advocate within the federal government for Métis, Non-Status Indians and urban Aboriginal people. INAC through the

Office of the Federal Interlocutor has been central to discussions with community representatives and the Province in developing the federal response.

- The Department of National Defence and the Province of Saskatchewan are planning to amend the principle agreement for the use of the Saskatchewan portion of the Range, and to amend the oil and gas access agreement permitting limited access to the Province of Saskatchewan for oil and gas exploration, development and production purposes. There is a duty to consult with Aboriginal people regarding the access agreement, and this will be undertaken by DND in the coming months.

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